

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

★ JAN 13 1929

U. S. Department of Agriculture

1.9
In 34h
Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, January 21, 1929.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Care of Bulbs." Prepared by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry,
Recipe for Chocolate Pudding from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

---ooOoo---

Well, well, well! What do you think! Uncle Ebenezer is coming right to the fore. Here is proof of his popularity, from a listener in the Middle West.

"Aunt Sammie," she writes, "your Uncle Ebenezer is an interesting person, and I enjoy his little talks a lot."

When I showed that to Uncle Ebenezer, he grinned, as bashfully as a school boy. I know it pleased him.

Uncle Ebenezer is an interesting person -- he really is. Did I tell you about the shower he fixed, for the bath room? You see, Uncle Ebenezer loves a shower bath -- he says he likes to feel "the sting of the salt sea spray."

Well, the other day he came home with a new-fangled apparatus for a shower-- spray, hose, and curtain. After everything was set up, he got under the shower. About 15 minutes later Billy came running up from the basement, where he had been playing.

"Aunt Sammy!" he shouted. "Come quick! Something's leaking in the coal bin!"

I rushed downstairs, and then I rushed up. I called to Uncle Ebenezer. He turned off the shower, and I heard him gasp.

"Great Caesar's ghost!" he shouted. "There's four inches of water on the floor, Aunt Sammy! I forgot to hang the curtain. What shall I mop the floor with!"

I told him where to find the floor cloth, and for 15 minutes more I could hear him splashing around, whistling strains from "Sailing, sailing, over the dark blue sea."

When he came out, dressed for dinner, he smiled a little ruefully. "Anyway he said, 'the floor is clean -- and the rug is clean.' Come in and see your shiny bath room."

"You see," explained Uncle Ebenezer, "everything would have been all right, if I hadn't forgotten the curtain. When you want a shower, you turn the handle of the faucet clear around, like this --"

And Uncle Ebenezer, suiting the action to the word, turned the handle of the faucet clear around, and before he could get out from under, he was dripping wet again. This involuntary shower was too much for Billy and me. We left, ungraciously, while Uncle Ebenezer changed his clothes again. When he came to dinner, we carefully avoided the subject of showers. While I was in the kitchen getting the dessert, I heard Billy ask, innocently: "Uncle Ebenezer, did you ever think you'd like to be a sailor, when you grew up?"

I came in just then, and changed the subject. Quite often, for the sake of harmony, it's a good idea to change the subject.

In fact, I think I'll change the subject now, and answer a few questions about bulbs -- narcissus, and Easter lilies, and so on. Or rather, I'll let W. R. B. answer the questions.

The first one is from a listener who says she bought a nice-looking pot of bulbs from the florist, and in a few days it was withered and dead. She wants to know what to do, to make bulbs last longer.

"First of all," says W.R.B., the garden adviser, "keep the bulbs cool. The temperature of the average living room is 10 to 20 degrees too warm for the bulbs. Of course, you want the bulbs in the dining room, where you can enjoy them during the day, so the best thing is to remove the pots containing the bulbs to a temperature of say 50 degrees during the night. This will help them to recover from the heat of the day, and they will last just that much longer.

"Another point about bulbs in the house, in common with other house plants, is that they are injured by fumes from the combustion of gas or oil stoves, or open lights of any kind, especially gas jets. The heated air that comes from a hot air furnace is particularly trying on all house plants, including bulbs. Sometimes gases leak from the combustion chamber of the furnace, and are carried into the room where the plants are kept. As a remedy, give the plants plenty of fresh air, opening a window occasionally, if the weather will permit, but don't allow the draft to blow directly on the plants."

"Do the different kinds of bulbs require the same kind of treatment when grown in the house?" I asked W.R.B.

"No, not exactly," was his reply. "Some will stand more heat and impure air than will others. Take hyacinths, for example. Hyacinth bulbs are planted in the pots, in good soil, in the fall of the year. They are stored in a cold frame, or in a bed with soil packed around them to keep them from drying out. Later, after the bulbs have made roots, and started a slow growth, the pots are brought into the house. This, of course, is a great change in temperature, and the bulbs will start a very sudden growth. If they can be kept in a comparatively cool place for several days after bringing them into the house, their growth will be slower, and they will produce better flowers, but the ordinary hyacinth will stand a slightly higher temperature in the house than most other bulbs.

"How about narcissus?" was my next question.

"All of the narcissus bulbs, including the Paper White, Chinese, daffodils, and jonquils should be kept as cool as possible, especially while they are coming into flower. If they are kept too warm at this period, the stems will be weak, and the flowers will mature quickly, and wither. They need temperature of about 45 degrees at night, and not above 60 degrees in the daytime.

Tulips require about the same temperature and treatment as do narcissus. All bulbs kept in the house should be watered at regular intervals, and kept rather moist. Any more questions?"

"One more," I said. "Tell me something about the Easter Lily. When the Easter lily comes from the florist, it is beautiful, but soon the flowers fade. It seems a pity that anything so beautiful should be lost. Isn't there some way to keep the bulbs, till they can flower again?"

"Yes," said W.R.B. "First of all, see that the Easter lily is kept reasonably moist, and away from gas fumes. After they finish blooming, Easter lily bulbs can be kept in the house, until freezing weather is over out of doors. Then set the bulbs in the open ground, and let them remain throughout the following winter. They will frequently give very pretty out-door flowers, the second spring.

"Remember," concluded my friend, "that the main point in the care of bulbs, in the house, is to keep them as cool as possible, and away from gas or combustion fumes."

Now I'm going to change the subject again, without much warning, and give you a recipe for Chocolate Bread Pudding. This is a dandy winter dessert, and delicious enough for a fancy dinner. Seven ingredients, for Chocolate Bread Pudding:

2 cups fine stale bread crumbs	2/3 cup sugar
4 cups milk	2 eggs
2 squares unsweetened chocolate	1/4 teaspoon salt, and
	1/2 teaspoon vanilla.

Seven ingredients: (Repeat)

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler. Add the sugar, and then gradually add the milk. When well mixed, add the bread crumbs and salt. Beat the eggs. Stir into the eggs, a portion of the hot mixture. Then add this to the part in the double boiler. Remove from the heat, and add the vanilla. Pour into a greased baking dish, set in a vessel partly filled with water, and bake in a moderate oven, until the pudding is firm in the center when cut with a pointed knife. Serve either hot or cold, with plain or whipped cream.

Tomorrow: "Cooking the Breakfast Cereal."

#

Handwritten notes in the top right corner, possibly including a date and a signature.

1